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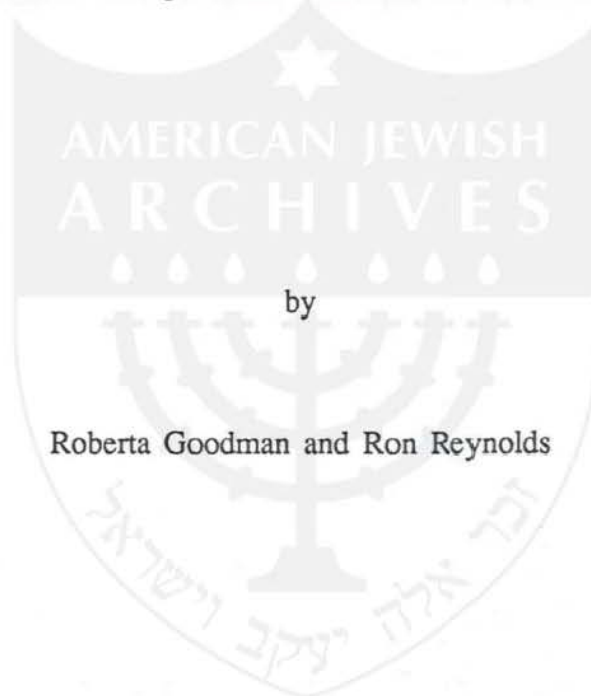
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# FIELD NOTES

A Paper Presented to

The Commission on Jewish Education in North America



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## Introduction

### INTRODUCTION

On December 4-5, 1989, a group of seventeen Jewish educators assembled in Cleveland, Ohio at the invitation of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, for the purpose of deliberating programmatic agendas for action in the areas of Adult Education, Early Childhood Jewish Education, Family Education, Media and Technology in Education, and Supplementary Education. The organization of this activity was facilitated by the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE), at the invitation of the Commission.

Those invited to participate reflect broad, yet varied backgrounds, as individuals, as educators, and as members of particular sub-fields. To illustrate, the adult education sub-group consisted of an Orthodox rabbi, a Conservative rabbi, and two female Ph.D.'s...one a professor, the other a prominent lay leader. Similar admixtures of personal ideology, role category, age, sex and training characterized each of the small working groups. Quite remarkably, all participants were personal "products" of the North American Jewish educational system. Most essentially, all serve on the "front lines" of Jewish education, or have direct, daily contact with front line personnel.

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The two-day activity consisted of a series of tightly structured tasks designed to:

- Establish criteria identifying what constitutes "good" and "effective" programming and practice in each sub-field.
- Identify factors which serve to differentiate "good" and "effective" programs and practices from others.
- Systematize the prevalent programmatic forms which currently comprise each sub-field.
- Brainstorm visions of enhanced programming and practice in each sub-field, describing the contributions such enhancements hold in store for Jewish continuity in North America.
- Developing action initiatives on both a continental and a local perspective designed to move each sub-field toward enhanced performance and impact.

These tasks were approached and accomplished with extraordinary commitment, focus, tenacity and enthusiasm by each of the participants, all of whom volunteered their services in response to CAJE's request and the invitation of the Commission. Their earnestness also reflects immense respect for the Commission's purpose, leadership and opportunity for unprecedented impact.

This report attempts to excerpt and edit salient aspects of each group's work in a way that will be of practical use to the Commission. Mindful of the reader's desire for brevity and cogency, the authors endeavored to achieve a sense of balance between analysis and prescription. This paper is not a monograph. It reflects the collective wisdom and

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experience of people who "live, think and breathe" their particular sub field of Jewish education and who represent its most cherished resource.





**EARLY CHILDHOOD JEWISH EDUCATION**

Success...at a Cost

At first glance, early childhood Jewish education would appear to be riding the crest of unprecedented success. Jewish nursery and pre-school programs across the continent - whether operated by synagogues, Jewish Community Centers or other communal auspices - are often filled-to-overflowing. Similarly, a variety of infant & toddler programs, parent-child groups, after-school programs for kindergarten and early primary grades, parent-and-family activities and Jewish child-care programs currently enjoy burgeoning enrollments.

A combination of market factors, labor trends, and changes in familial structure, have clearly contributed to the current boom. Early childhood Jewish education (ECJE) programs offer financially competitive options to a growing number of working parents (and others) for the educational, social, cultural and spiritual (not to mention physical) care and development of their children. Moreover, ECJE programs often serve as effective recruitment and retention programs for the parent institutions in which they operate, and as potentially rich "feeders" for Jewish day schools.

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While these developments provide great cause for optimism, concerned critics maintain that the superficial indicators of success (e.g. expanding enrollments and programming) often mask the operation of pre-schools which are marginally Jewish, and which are often conducted by personnel (mainly teachers) who are seriously under-trained, under-equipped and woefully under-compensated. Day-care programs are often lacking in both educational content and Jewish substance and frequently operate as "stand-alone" programs, rather than as components of a comprehensive, well integrated early childhood regimen.

Leaders in the field observe a lack of local and national understanding of what early childhood Jewish education is, and it's critical importance in contributing to the foundation of a child's personality, value system and identity. Consequently, synagogue and agency decisionmakers frequently fail to regard early childhood programs as an integral part of total Jewish schooling. This attitude, in turn, often places the Jewish nursery school in a "stand-alone" posture, with the accompany expectation that such schools should be financially self-sustaining (if not income-producers) for their parent organizations. And for the most part, Jewish nursery schools "succeed" in so doing...through the maintenance of dismally low salaries, and lack of staff training and support. (The typical starting salary earned by a Jewish nursery school teacher is \$8,000 - 10,000 less than that of a public school kindergarten teacher possessing the same credentials.)

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In summary, one of the potentially-most-impactful sectors of Jewish education operates in a state of diminished effectiveness for lack of investment in the development of human resources and comprehensive programs.

### Toward Professionalization

Early childhood Jewish education is seriously under-professionalized. There is a national shortage of qualified teaching personnel. Only two Jewish teacher-training institutions (Spertus College of Judaica and the Boston Hebrew College) provide comprehensive early childhood teacher training programs. Consequently, the vast majority of early childhood Jewish educators are seriously deficient in knowledge of Judaica, Hebraica and Jewish pedagogy.

Only six communities in the United States provide central agency early childhood departments staffed by full-time personnel. Few stipends exist to support in-service education programs. There is no nationally recognized teacher certification apparatus. An acknowledged body of professional standards governing entry-level requirements and criteria for advancement is absent. And early childhood personnel suffer a serious lack of status relative to both secular-school counterparts and other Jewish educators and professionals.



## Early Childhood Education

Only through a significant, continentally-coordinated investment of resources in support of a comprehensive training and professional development initiative can early childhood Jewish education hope to achieve a greater share of its vast potential.

### A Proposal for Action

We propose that one institution be charged with the responsibility to develop an Office of Early Childhood Jewish Education. Such an Office could be housed in a Jewish university, Teachers College, central agency, or JESNA. Staffed by a complement of full-time, expert personnel, the Office would function as a continental planner for local training programs designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills designated by a Protocol of Professional Standards to be developed by the Office, with the advisement of a continental advisory body. The Office would also oversee the conduct of appropriate, action-research and as an evaluator of and clearinghouse for Judaic instructional products and materials.

The planning and coordination of locally-based teacher-training programs would utilize at least three models. The Itinerant Seminar model operates by sending an expert teacher-trainer (say in Bible) to a particular community for the purpose of conducting an intensive seminar. This model

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is most suitable for adoption by smaller communities, where a single seminar could accommodate the majority of local personnel.

Larger communities might participate in Centralized Trainer Seminars. Here, participating communities identify an individual who will receive intensive, advanced training in a particular area of ECJE such that he or she will be able to train others in his/her home community.

Larger communities might also draw upon Resident Professors, certified by the Office to conduct various local seminars (as well as to conduct Itinerant Seminars and/or Centralized Trainer Seminars).

All local training programs would be governed by standards established by the Office and would confer credits under a uniform certification system. Central agencies would be called upon to facilitate the linkage of salary advancement with the accumulation of professional development credits.

Local training and professional development opportunities would consist of more than seminars and/or formal courses. The Office will also identify a cadre of artists, story-tellers, musicians, drama specialists and others who would provide enrichment workshops, demonstrations and performances.

At the continental level, the office would work with Jewish universities and teacher-training institutions to develop (additional) degree programs in ECJE with specializations in sub-areas of the field.

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In addition to the development and coordination of local training programs, the Office will oversee action-research programs designed to inform training activities as well as the development of instructional products.

The overarching charge of the Office will be to function as an advocate for excellence in Early Childhood Jewish Education. To this end, the Office will endeavor to capacitate local leadership to develop early childhood programs which:

1. Employ personnel who are sufficiently well-trained in Early Childhood education, Judaica and Hebrew language.
2. Follow a curricular program which is both developmentally and religiously appropriate, and which effectively integrates general and Jewish content.
3. Regard the whole child as a unique participant within the context of his/her family and culture.
4. Incorporate the Jewish home, synagogue, community, Israel and Klal Yisrael as an integral part of the curricular program.
5. View parent and extended family involvement/education as an integral component of the total program.
6. Create and maintain environments which are aesthetically appealing and visually Jewish.
7. Seek to develop state of the art facilities for the exclusive use of the early childhood program, with highest quality equipment and materials appropriate for use by specific age groups.
8. Strive to meet the full range of programmatic needs of its constituents by providing comprehensive, integrated program embracing infant/toddler, parent/child groups, year round child



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care, after school programs for kindergarten/primary grades, and parent and family education activities.

9. Actively seek to secure the moral, professional and financial support of its sponsoring institution as well as the support of local federations.
10. Accept responsibility for continually educating the community about the importance of Early Childhood Jewish Education.

In summary, we believe that an investment in the upgrading of human resources, directed by a continental coordinating mechanism, will best serve the current needs of early childhood Jewish education. By strengthening the level of knowledge and skill of the teacher, early childhood programs will become substantively more Jewish. By providing financial incentives - linked to the accumulation of credits, the dignity of the teacher will be strengthened. We believe that these measures will greatly enrich all of Jewish education.



## Supplementary Education

### SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

#### The Mis-Matched Reality and Image of Supplementary Jewish Education

The prevailing opinion within the North American Jewish community is that the supplementary school is a failure. Yet, some of the most exciting and innovative programs, curricula, leadership development, and personnel training in Jewish education today is occurring in the halls of supplementary schools.

Typically, within supplementary schools there exist programs and curricula designed to enhance and enrich the classroom experience. Many of these programs reflect the supplementary schools' abilities to network with support agencies for programmatic and fiduciary resources locally, nationally and internationally. Enumerated here are some of these programs. Letter "a" denotes various program goals, and letter "b" denotes programs currently in operation.

1. Retreats
  - a. - develop a sense of community
  - provide an opportunity to learn by doing
  - provide Jewish role models
  - show Judaism "live" and "alive"
  - b. - Shabbaton by grade or by school away at a camp
  - 1-day in town
  - a retreat with another synagogue school
  - scholars' retreat for distinguished grade members representing all the schools in one city
  - regional retreats

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- classroom and retreat program which has classroom study units with a retreat completing each unit.
2. Life Cycle Training
- a. - to give skills in life cycle areas
    - to increase familiarity with and observance of life cycle events
    - to increase potential of continuation of Judaism as we know it
  - b. - beyond tutoring, B'nai Mitzvah programs for students and/or parents on issues related to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
    - Confirmation programs with requirements for essays or projects, service attendance, social action, and more
3. Student Teacher Programs
- a. - to tie teens to the community
    - to provide age appropriate experiences for teens that are rewarding within a Jewish school
    - to teach leadership and teaching skills with hopes of generating future leadership
    - to create role models for younger children
  - b. - teaching assistantship programs which provide the teaching assistant with skills and classroom experience
    - retreats and/or conferences for teaching assistants sponsored by at least 3 national organizations
4. Parent Education
- a. - to enhance parent knowledge, attitudes, and commitments
    - to create partnerships between parents and schools
    - to provide an opportunity to expand on and/or build upon prior learning from an adult perspective
  - b. - parallel programs for parents (PEP - Parent Effectiveness Programs)
    - Holiday Workshop Series
    - lecture series
    - parenting classes
    - Hebrew classes and adult B'nai Mitzvah classes
    - one classroom session devoted to parent/student study
5. Family Education
- a. - to help families work more effectively with the school
    - to enhance Jewish family living
    - to give family a common base of Jewish and general information
  - b. - holiday fairs



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- Shabbat experiences (some schools are moving from Sunday to Saturday for the purpose of creating family Shabbat experiences and a sense of holiness)
  - retreats
6. Staff Development
- a. - to orient staff to school culture
  - to prevent burnout, enhance retention
  - to "keep the flame burning"
  - to create a community among faculty
  - to augment and enrich teaching skills and content knowledge
  - b. - in-house faculty workshops
  - city-wide workshops often sponsored by central agencies
  - mini-CAJE (Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education) conferences on a regional basis
7. Academic Credit Bearing Programs
- a. - to demonstrate that what happens in a Jewish school matters in the "real world"
  - to reinforce the importance of Judaic and Hebraic subjects
  - b. - Hebrew language courses in Hebrew high school settings for which secular high school language credit is given
  - Judaic courses in Hebrew high school settings for which college credit is given
  - intensive study experiences in Israel for which secular high school credit is given
8. Social Action Programs
- a. - to put into practice what we teach
  - to create an opportunity to practice desirable adult behaviors
  - to provide vivid experiences
  - b. - *tzedakah* fair
  - ongoing visits to nursing homes, hospitals, senior adults
  - food and clothing drives organized by students
  - helping in a food bank or meals on wheels
  - tutoring younger kids

The list also includes: FIELD TRIPS expanding the classroom beyond the four walls; COMMUNITY SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAMS bringing together youth with a diverse range of backgrounds; JUNIOR CONGREGATIONS which train youth to take part in services; JEWISH

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ARTS which enhance Jewish expression; YOUTH LIBRARY programs with video tape lending libraries and an emphasis on getting our students to read Jewish literature where they may not read textbooks; CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT by teachers, education directors, central agencies, national organizations, publishers, and Jewish school supply companies (posters, Israel kits, Jewish toys, etc.) which create a quality learning experience and learning environment; YOUTH GROUPS which create a different context for students to connect with the school.

Supplementary Jewish education is more than just schooling. Its audience is expanding beyond schooling for the elementary and secondary child ages 8 - 16, as it is becoming a place of Jewish learning in the broadest sense for post-Confirmands, families, adults, and pre-schoolers.

### The Perpetuation of the Mis-Matched Image

With so much innovation and quality programming, why does a perception of gloom, doom and hopelessness continue to prevail for the supplementary school? Here and there, one finds programming excellence. These examples are widely diversified, geographically and denominationally. Within some schools, excellence is pervasive, but within others, these models of excellence may occur in one grade and not in another.

This lack of consistent quality is related to the dependence on a large number of untrained staff; both teachers and education directors. Several



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Jewish institutions of higher learning have significantly professionalized the role of education director. Still, there remain more jobs than trained personnel. Some of these positions are parttime rather than fulltime, and unable to attract well trained staff. In addition, whereas a congregation has set requirements for rabbinic training, similar standards and expectations for the training of education directors, much less teachers, generally do not exist. Too often, the only requirement for getting into the classroom is being a warm, available Jewish body.

Few people can make a career, much less support themselves, teaching two or two-and-a-half-hours-a-week or even twelve hours-a-week under the present system. But they can and do spend time acquiring skills, materials, and ideas which contribute to their continued professional growth and success in the classroom when made available. The availability of funding, resources, time allotment, and programs for teacher training is a continual problem which hampers the supplementary school. Completion of training programs needs to result in increased salary and benefits. Here too, resources are sorely lacking.

Supplementary education has not yet recovered from the effects of research in the 1970's whose major measure of school impact upon adult Jewish identity was tied to the aggregate number of hours of study attained. Many graduates of the supplementary school fell short of Geoffrey Bock's 1,000 hour threshold, and almost all fell short of Himmelfarb's 3,000 hour

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figure. This research approach neither described the supplementary school and its impact on the child, nor analyzed its effectiveness. Rather, the research examined the effects on adults, years after leaving school. This research affected community perceptions and the allocation of funds for Jewish education through the 1970s and 1980's.

Those involved in supplementary education identify the most serious ailment from which the supplementary school suffers as being low self-esteem. There exist low expectations among: the public - federation and community powers; parents of the schools themselves; teachers for their students and what can be learned in the time allotted; lay people in general. Talk about the supplementary school revolves around the language of powerlessness: a lack of stipends for teacher training, certification and accreditation; and inadequate benefits for personnel, physical environments, supplies, educational materials - textbooks, audio visual materials, and the like.

The supplementary school in the past has been advertised in an apologetic manner. It has been identified as being: a choice for minimalism, one step better than no formal Jewish education but not as good as the day school; a population pool for more glamorous programs like trips to Israel, Jewish camps, missions to Eastern Europe; a place from which many of the Jewish community leadership emerged in spite of their supplementary school experience.



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### Solutions for Matching Image and Reality

We must view the supplementary school for what it is. Congregations sponsor most supplementary education. The supplementary school is an integral and indistinguishable part of this dominant and vital institution in North American Jewish life, the synagogue. The supplementary school provides: a forum for Jews to learn, discover, and do; training for present and future leadership; positive role models for Jewish living. It also inspires people to continue or begin living a Jewish life.

The perception that the supplementary school can make a difference must be developed and diffused. The solutions for this include: 1) research and its dissemination; 2) a public relations campaign which assists in making Jewish Education a priority on the North American Jewish agenda in a substantive way; and 3) the training of lay leadership sensitizing them to their own need for continued Jewish study and to the concerns, issues and solutions.

Research. We need to more fully understand the mechanisms which make high-payoff supplementary school programs successful. This type of research, which upholds the integrity and viability of the supplementary educational program would: inform national public attention; lend esteem and recognition to local communities who are the benefactors of these quality programs; raise expectations for the worthwhileness of the

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supplementary school; and allow for replicability and adaptation of model successful programs in other communities.

Public Relations. Public opinion must be focused on the successes and additional potential successes of the supplementary school. We must show faith in the potential of the system and help to set high expectations. This is not a campaign for simply preserving the *status quo* or maintaining complacency. We must show that we care about the quality of the outcome, about the seriousness of learning that can actually take place. We must publicly recognize teachers, education directors, students, parents, lay leaders for their contribution to Jewish education. The visibility of the supplementary school will raise the self esteem and expectations of those involved, and, in turn, the desirability of contributing one's time and one's money to the setting.

Lay Leadership Training. This requires conversations between community leaders and Jewish educational professionals as well as forums for all the stakeholders in the community. This enhanced communication helps in the re-evaluation of perceptions, and allows for the creation of a shared vision. Overall, making Jewish Education a priority calls for lay leadership training and lay leaders to continue their own Jewish studies. It calls for familiarity with the issues and structures involved.



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The supplementary school has needs that a change in image alone will not adequately address. As previously mentioned, the shortage of qualified personnel both as educational directors and as teachers, is a well documented and much discussed issue. Improving the visibility and status of the Jewish educator will help in attracting people to the field. But this must be coupled with higher salaries and the complement of benefits; more viable career opportunities for employment and professionalization through the consolidation of parttime positions into fulltime pay and comprehensive benefits - there is a need for a community mechanism to provide subsidy funding and coordination as most of these consolidations can not be sustained at present solely by the existing institutions; funding for the recruitment and training of new personnel; funding to retain and improve the skills of existing faculty through programs in North America and Israel; and funding for in-service opportunities, in North America and Israel for the stimulation and enrichment of already trained personnel.

The present arrangement of training and in-service options requires expansion especially geographically. There is a need for more of what exists in the way of summer programs and conferences. The Jewish educational training institutions need to offer a greater array of innovative programs to impact professionalization continentally. This would require the expansion of their faculties.

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The planning and coordination of locally based teacher training, particularly in areas where there are no Jewish educational training institutions, would utilize at least three models. The Itinerant Seminar model operates by sending an expert teacher trainer, say in Bible or teaching Bible, to a particular community for the purpose of conducting an intensive seminar. This may occur more than once during the year. This can be ongoing with a change of subjects, and quite likely a change of instructors over the years.

In the Centralized Trainer Seminar, credentialed individuals from a variety of communities go to a central location for training to teach a particular course or curriculum upon their return to their home community. Rather than the student going away, the teacher goes away for the training.

Both of these models would benefit from the creation of Resident Adjunct Faculty for the various Jewish educational teacher training institutions or some accrediting central agency which would develop curricula for teacher training or education director training. They would provide the necessary training for these adjunct personnel. In turn, these adjunct faculty would teach courses or lead workshops for teachers, education directors, and lay leaders. These Adjunct Faculty could be parttime or fulltime, and would reside throughout North America.

Mobilizing Judaic study and Jewish secular education faculty in universities is an area requiring exploration. This growing presence of

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Jewish university faculty could: teach in the schools; teach our teachers; encourage students to consider careers in Jewish education; advocate for the cause of Jewish education; help research issues in Jewish education; become involved as lay people; teach lay leaders; end even provide credit for undergraduate or graduate apprenticeships and student teaching in Jewish schools.

Finally, the influx of grants and/or fulltime positions could significantly impact upon curriculum development and research in Jewish education beyond just programmatic research of quality programs. Funding to make the physical plants and equipment of the supplementary school as sophisticated as that available in secular schools would enhance the enterprise.

The supplementary school is full of promise for augmenting the quality of Jewish continuity and Jewish life. In terms of number of students, it remains the major institutional structure in North America. There are reasonable and achievable steps which could be undertaken to impact the quality of supplementary education if the supplementary educational process is given the communal and continental resources and priority status it merits. An experiment to attain quality and professional supplementary education with concentrated strategic planning, implementation, evaluation and research on a community level would be a worthwhile endeavor.



FAMILY EDUCATION

Family education is an emerging field which regards the entire family as a learning unit, taking into account the changing needs and norms of the contemporary family and integrating the many areas of Judaic knowledge and practice with methodologies based on dialogue and experience.

Family education programs are conducted in a broad range of settings, including homes, schools, camps, congregations, Jewish organizations, and the community-at-large. The range of activities which comprise the field are too numerous to mention, but include parallel study programs, Jewish life cycle courses, family camp experiences, Jewish life-cycle classes, holiday and ritual observance training, Jewish genealogy courses, *havura* education, Adult Mini-Schools, and more.

Ideally, family education involves the entire family in Jewish learning experiences. It empowers parents to be Jewish teachers to their children, utilizing the entire community as a "classroom." It does not avoid difficult issues such as intermarriage, divorce, domestic violence, homosexuality, and drugs. Yet, good family education is education...not therapy. Embracing all age groups, familial configurations, and organizational boundaries, family



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education possesses the potential for enormous impact upon Jewish life and Jewish continuity.

### The Power to Transform

Excellent family education can transform not only individuals and families, but the Jewish organizations in which they participate. As families become involved in the Jewish educational process, perceptions of congregations and schools become transformed from "drop off points" to sources of learning and support, growth and fulfillment. Concomitantly, Jewish educators come to regard parents not as adversaries, but as allies and colleagues. Serious parental involvement in their childrens' education can also be expected to yield a wealth of insights and suggestions which can improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Jewish education in general will change to the extent that *families* are regarded as clients. Rather than being restricted to the essentially artificial environment of the school and classroom, family education's "campus" contains the entirety of one's social environment. At the same time, family education builds organic links between family, home, school and congregation.

Traditionally, the acquisition of a *formal* Jewish education was the effect of a Jewish identity which was formed in the home, the extended

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family and neighborhood, and through daily participation in the life of an organic community. *The receipt of a formal Jewish education was an effect of Jewish identity, not a cause.* Today, much of Jewish education operates on precisely the opposite (and as yet unvalidated) premise that the acquisition of a formal Jewish education *can cause the development of Jewish identity.* Family education endeavors to liberate Jewish education from the narrow conceptual confines of *schooling*...and in the process, seeks to revitalize Jewish schools.

### Challenges

Because family education is still an emerging field, there exists uncertainty about what it is, what it isn't, and how it might best be structured relative to the existing Jewish education "delivery system." This lack of clarity generates constant issues of turf which require constant negotiation and which oftentimes engender conflict. (Does the sisterhood perceive the Family Chanuka Workshop as an impingement upon its time-honored Chanukah Bazaar and Latke Dinner?)

Lack of support from clergy is identified as another challenge area. Experience has demonstrated that family education is generally unsuccessful in congregational settings wherein it is not validated by the rabbi.

In many instances, resistance to participation in family life education stems from peoples' negative recollections of their own Jewish education.

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Finally, family education, like so much of Jewish education in general, suffers from a lack of funding for adequate salaries and benefits, training, quality programming and good research.

### Toward Enhancement

Jewish family education works. A critical mass of replicable, high profile programs (e.g. The Holiday Workshop Series, Jewish Experiences for Families component programs, Jewish LaMaze, etc.) have been reliably utilized in numerous communities throughout the continent with excellent results. In order to enhance the effectiveness and impact of family education, it is suggested that resources be invested in the following areas:

1. Training, Recruitment and Placement of Family Educators
2. Curriculum Development
3. Inventory and Research
4. Media Utilization

### Training, Recruitment and Placement

Family education classes and seminars should be offered in the major Jewish education training institutions and should be *required* in the training of educators, rabbis and communal service workers. *Without high-level specialized training programs in family education, there is little likelihood that the role of Family Educator will be accorded widespread recognition*



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*and organizational acceptance.* This is of particular concern, as the development of the position of Family Educator is essential to the proliferation of high quality family education programming.

In-service education programs should attempt to reach principals, rabbis, lay people, social workers, camp directors, center directors, central agency staff federation planning personnel, and others. Suitably funded national conferences and consultations could bring substantial numbers of persons together for intensive professional development. The CAJE Conference should also be utilized for this purpose.

### Curriculum Development

Although almost all Jewish educational curricula lends itself to adaptation in family education, the development of *scope and sequence maps* would greatly enhance the field. There are a variety of people educating families about different areas of Judaism. They would all be helped if curricular materials of a more standardized nature were "Guidebooks for Jewish Home Enhancement", or a "Minimal Skills Handbook" are examples of the type of curricular materials which are in serious need of development.

*Materials for home study and home help* should be developed. Such things as how to take a Jewish family vacation, create a family reunion, or make childrens' bedtime into a Jewish experience need to be made available. The development of high quality, validated instructional products such as

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these, however, requires significant funding in support of materials creation, tryout-and-revision, and evaluation.

### Inventory and Research

It would be extremely helpful if an inventory of Jewish family education settings, formats, programs and materials. Research directed at determining whether the currently-diffused family education programs (such as those mentioned above) are successful in transmitting knowledge and/or facilitating changes in attitudes and behavior is also necessary. To make major investments of money, time and effort in any area *without* accompanying research and evaluation of this nature is irresponsible.

Additionally, there is great need to develop models of "successful families" as well as families that have "successfully" transmitted values, so as to better understand what accounted for these changes. This kind of focused examination provides the underpinnings for the development of effective materials, methods and programs.

### Media Utilization

Home media for learning as a family unit is an area begging for development. *Jewish Nintendo*, along with "how to" video tapes can fill an important place in peoples' homes. Such development will, of necessity, require substantial investment, if products are to be competitive with other media-based materials for home use. The development of Jewish newspaper

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supplements (such as *L'Chayim* in the Detroit Jewish News) should become nationally syndicated.

### A Continental Agenda

Workable community models for the provision of family education already exist and need not be re-invented. Most models provide some form of centralized planning and coordination of family education programs which are conducted at local sites, usually synagogues and centers, with the entire community joining together for periodic larger celebrations or extravaganzas.

Each organization, institution, agency and/or congregation interested in providing family education programming assembles an advisory committee from which delegates to a communal advisory committee are drawn in turn. In this manner, a family education network is formed. A *Family Education Coordinator* is employed by the community and is available to assist both organizational and communal committees plan and implement family education classes and programs.

As high quality Jewish family life education programs are effectively developed, implemented and incorporated, the nature of Jewish education will undergo a metamorphosis. No longer will children - in isolation from parents, siblings, extended family and community - constitute our primary client population. Boundaries between educational institutions and between "formal," "nonformal," and "informal" Jewish education will blur. Judaism's perennial relevancy will be more clearly and convincingly demonstrated to



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greater numbers as families and individuals are strengthened. For Jewish family education, the future is now.



## Adult Education

### ADULT EDUCATION

#### Agenda for Adult Jewish Education

Adult Jewish Education could be the cutting edge of the reform currently being generated by the leadership of the American Jewish community. We say this because we believe that without a Jewishly educated adult community none of the planned reforms in Jewish Education can take hold. Adult Jewish Education is the one Programmatic Option which encompasses and addresses the three Enabling Options: vocational training - 1) dealing with the shortage of qualified personnel for Jewish education; 2) developing an informed and Jewishly educated laity who will be major agents of change and who will desire 3) generating support for and commitment to significant additional funding for Jewish education on a communal and continental basis. For the purposes of this study, vocational education, is not included in this discussion of Adult Jewish Education.

Throughout Jewish history, leadership by a knowledgeable Jewish laity has characterized successful Jewish communities. Jewishly informed adults are necessary for promoting and directing Jewish institutions and for furthering the agenda developed by the North American Jewish community. In a time of rapid change, Jewish education can provide adults in leadership

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positions with the tools and the ability to shape themselves and their communities according to Jewish values rather than be shaped by outside forces.

When there are discrepancies between what children are taught and the way adults behave, children see this learning as empty and valueless and turn their backs to their studies and Jewish life. Adult Jewish Education addresses Jewish continuity: a commitment to life long Jewish learning, is a commitment to life long Jewish involvement.

Knowledgeable Jewish adults enhance the profession of Jewish teaching. They serve as avocational teachers and promote Jewish education as a desirable career for Jewish adults. The Jewish teaching profession will grow only when Jewish education is valued. It is through their own study that Jewish adults come to value Jewish education.

### Characterizing Adult Jewish Education

Diversity, flexibility, and multiplicity characterize Adult Jewish Education in terms of audience; times, settings and programmatic structures; and entry points. The audience of Adult Jewish Education is diverse in terms of 1) age and family constellation -singles, adults, single parent families, senior adults; 2) affiliation - Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Reform, and so forth; 3) previous Jewish educational



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experience -day school background, supplementary school, Jewish camping, youth group, etc.

Currently programs in Adult Jewish Education are offered different times during the week day, evenings, Shabbat, Sunday mornings, weekends. Courses are offered for a day, a week, once a week, six weeks, a semester, a year. Courses occur during the school year, over vacations, and in the summer.

These courses are sponsored by 1) synagogues; 2) Jewish Institutions of Higher Learning; 3) Secular Institutions of Higher Learning and their Continuing Education Departments; 4) Communal Organizations such as AIPAC, Hadassah, NCJW, B'nai Brith, etc.; 5) Federations including leadership training; 6) Jewish Community Centers; 7) Jewish Family Services; 8) Boards and Bureaus of Jewish Education; 9) Independent Organizations like the Melton School; 10) Museums; 11) Israel and Eastern Europe missions and adult experiences; 12) Conferences on Jewish life i.e. the General Assembly; 13) Computer Networks; 14) Chavurot; 15) Cooperative/Community based programs.

Structures and methodologies are diverse. There is a decreasing reliance on lectures and simultaneously an increase in experiential and participatory programs. Formats include: retreats, discussion groups, home based or individual study, audio and videotapes, cable television programs, panels, tours, popular literature, Jewish periodicals, newsletters.

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People's entry points into Adult Jewish Education vary. They come with a variety of Jewish and general educational backgrounds, Hebrew and Judaic knowledge, and Jewish life skills. They have a variety of interests, and personal or familial needs. Their commitments vary by level or intensity; areas of interest; and organizations or institutions.

The diversity, multiplicity and flexibility of Adult Jewish Education hides some serious concerns. 1) Although Adult Jewish Education needs to consist of a variety of formats and times, the learner is at a disadvantage in finding the best program/learning environment suited for his/her needs. 2) Personnel are varied and at many levels of proficiency. Since most instructors teach one or two classes at a time in adult education, they are often unfamiliar with Adult Educational Theory and techniques. There is a need for training personnel in Adult Educational Theory and techniques. 3) There is a paucity of theoretical and programmatic (what works and why) research in Adult Jewish Education. In turn, existing and future research must be disseminated to practitioners. 4) The image and importance of Adult Jewish Education is given lip service rather than priority status. Jewish communal leaders need to come from the ranks of those who participate in their own course of Adult Jewish Education. Public recognition needs to be given to those who do pursue Adult Jewish Education confirming the importance of Adult Jewish Education; 5) The majority of Jewish children receive some Jewish education. The same can not be said for adults. There

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is a need for outreach into alternative contexts such as health clubs, doctor's offices, law firms, and other non-conventional settings in order to reach every Jewish adult. 6) Present models of adult education are traditionally established, class oriented, and not learner centered. See the discussion of Good Adult Jewish Education. 8) There is a lack of curricula and curricular materials developed specifically for adults.

### Good Adult Jewish Education

Although characterized by diversity, flexibility and multiplicity, there are certain overriding principles of good Adult Jewish Education. Adult Jewish Education is defined as non-degree, non-professional, life-span education that has Jewish content. Effective Adult Jewish Education is a program of Jewish content involving large numbers of Jews, which recognizes and meets individual student's needs and results in increased commitment and/or involvement in Jewish life.

Good Adult Jewish Education is learner centered and not teacher centered, voluntary or non-coercive, participatory and not passive. Good Adult Jewish Education is not an extension of the type or approach to education provided to children. Good Adult Jewish Education 1) takes place in settings that are attractive, inspirational, goal oriented, varied and well designed; 2) provides for expression of subjective feelings; 3) allows learners



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to experience learning as useful such as education for ritual behavior; 4) provides opportunities for social interaction; 5) provides ancillary benefits such as meeting social needs, enhancing self worth; 6) follows up on learners' experience and provides next steps; 7) is non-judgmental; 8) enables providing the learner with skills confirming the learner's abilities, perceptions and conclusions; 9) balances cognitive and experiential or participatory formats; 10) maintains a differentiated program to allow for individual differences; 11) is openly responsive to learners' and group's needs.

### Plan for Action

To create an aura of Adult Jewish Education as the "in thing", to reach as many Jewish adults as possible, and to enhance the quality of Adult Jewish Education, the following is recommended:

1. Any field test site ought to include some Adult Jewish Education component.
2. Outreach to all adults not pursuing Adult Jewish Education through use of alternative contexts such as health clubs, doctors' offices, law firms, etc.
3. Develop a body of Adult Jewish learning research to inform practice.
  - a. Create a curriculum for training full time Adult Jewish Educational Personnel, both coordinators and instructors.

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- b. Create a curriculum for in-service training for the existing part time providers of Adult Jewish Education including Jewish communal workers and Jewish social workers.
  - c. Disseminate the findings of the research.
- 4. Create positions for full time Adult Jewish Educators and standards for accreditation and certification.
- 5. Develop components in self help programs such as JACS has done with Alcoholics Anonymous, Jewish Marriage Encounter, etc.
- 6. Urge that all Jewish community leadership training programs include Judaic study. Urge the adoption of some commitment for one's own Adult Jewish Education as a requirement for Jewish communal leadership.
- 7. Develop a continental marketing campaign for Adult Jewish Education.
- 8. Provide public recognition and/or accreditation of Adult Jewish learning to elicit communal and peer support.
- 9. Develop curricular materials which utilize technology such as computers, interactive video, etc.
- 10. Develop Adult Jewish Education curriculum and curricular materials which are learner centered models.
  - a. Design accredited independent study options.
- 11. Create guidance services for the consumers of Adult Jewish Educational opportunities, the learner, through:
  - a. local guides;
  - b. a guide of continental and international programs;
  - c. an 800 number for finding the appropriate program for the individual;
  - d. local numbers or adult education counselors for individualized help.

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### A Model Center for Jewish Continuity

The Adult Education literature speaks of a continental program for Adult Jewish Education. There is a need for long ranging planning; sustained research on Adult Jewish Education; and curriculum development for the providers and the learners in the Adult Jewish Educational setting. Historically, these functions have occurred haphazardly.

One can envision the creation of a Model Center for Jewish Continuity which would fulfill these functions. Imagine this center for a moment: On the first floor are aesthetically pleasing classrooms of all different sizes most of which resemble libraries or lounges rather than the traditional school room. These rooms serve a dual purpose as meeting rooms for the learners to help in the planning of more educational opportunities. On the second floor are the counselling offices for the Adult Jewish Education mentors who tutor, advise, promote and organize learning opportunities. These mentors work with the learners and the providers of Adult Jewish Education. Some of these tutors have special outreach skills and responsibilities and others are proficient in marketing. There is also a computer room, a video lending library with study guides, and the interactive video classroom. On the third floor are a range of researchers. There are those who study how adults learn; others study existing programs and their effects on the learner; still others develop curriculum for learners and some develop curriculum for the providers of Adult Jewish Education.



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Finally, on this floor is the journal and newsletter editor who disseminates this research.

Certainly there is a great need in North America for one of these Model Centers for Jewish Continuity devoted to Adult Jewish Education. In addition, there is a need for each community or region to have individuals who can be the resource people for Adult Jewish Education working hand in hand with this Model Center for Jewish Continuity and the locale.



## Media & Technology

### Media and Technology

We live in an age influenced by the development, proliferation, and dissemination of media and technology. PCs, VCRs, FAXs have entered our homes, our work places, our ways of viewing and encountering the world all in a relatively brief period of time. Yet, media and technology are currently nearly non-existent and therefore, obviously, under utilized, for Jewish educational purposes.

Presently, media (media will continually be used to refer to both technology and media) in Jewish settings appear in a variety of formats. They vary in quality and subject area.

- 1) Electronic Video (VHS)
  - Plethora of Holocaust videos
  - Moderate quantity on Life Cycle, Holidays and Israel
  - Paucity on Prophets, T'fillah and Hebrew Language
  - Overall quality is moderate
  - Production in all areas except for the Holocaust is decreasing
- 2) Projected video - film, slides, filmstrips, overhead transparencies
  - fallen into disuse except for Jewish film festival programs for adults
- 3) Print - sacred texts, textbooks, primary source documents, work sheets, ditto packs
  - Use of primary source documents, worksheets, etc. increasing
  - Textbook usage decreasing
- 4) Computer Software
  - Greatest amount of software is for Hebrew language,
  - Noticeable amounts of software on Jewish Law, holidays, and Bible
  - Some software for history, Israel, prayer and Talmud
  - Over 80% of the software are drill and practice

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- A third of the software is good professional quality, the rest is moderate to poor.

Missing from this list are interactive video and computer programs.

The use of Media in Jewish Education lags behind the general culture and the secular school setting. The existence of the items listed above does not mean that they are found in all communities, day or supplementary schools, or homes. Their distribution is quite random. In general, the quality of equipment is better in the home than in the Jewish educational setting. Yet, the potential of the home market for computer software and videos on Jewish subjects has barely been explored. Jewish Schools and community centers, to name a few, are bereft of working, up-to-date equipment as they rely too heavily on used equipment donated from supporters' homes or offices.

Media in Mass Cultures refers to media disseminated to mass audiences normally outside the structure of existing Jewish organizations. This form of communication shapes images and perceptions of Jews among the general society as well as self perceptions. This media appears in the following forms:

- 1) Feature Films, Television Programs
  - Preponderance of Holocaust, Israel-Arab or Jewish Christian themes, a conflict orientation
  - Either Jew as victim or Jew as Kingpin, mastermind
  - Many professional productions which explore Jewish themes function in a random context of support
- 2) Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Music and Theater
  - Many new books, mainly fiction, for children and adolescents, the perception being that Jews still read



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The dominance of Holocaust, Israel-Arab or Jewish Christian themes in Media in Mass Culture through feature films and television nurtures "survival" and the "burden of history" as primary modes of contemporary Jewish identity. This is rather than internally generated, joyful and affirmative perspectives. The latter is congruent with an approach to Jewish continuity and life that fosters celebration, observance, and performance of mitzvot including tzedakah.

### Key Considerations for Media in Jewish Education

Media has many unique qualities and abilities which could enhance Jewish Education.

1) The flexibility of setting allows media to affect Jewish Education in the geographically remote or less populated Jewish community, as well as those living in the more Jewishly populated communities. It can reach the less mobile or immobile population of handicapped and elderly.

2) Media is fluid and able to respond to emerging educational and affective needs of Jewish communities.

3) Professional quality media will enhance the status and image of Jewish education and educators. That which gains the attention of media, people perceive as important.

4) Professional quality media will appeal and therefore attract greater numbers of sensitive and intelligent individuals currently alienated from or marginally affiliated with Jewish life.

5) New modalities of instruction will enhance the effectiveness of formal (schools), informal (camping, youth group, etc.), and family Jewish Education.

6) Professional quality augments the desire of people to study Jewish texts, history, heritage, et al.

7) Professional quality media creates greater understanding and empathy among and between differing forms and expressions of Judaism.

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8) Professional quality media involves talented and creative individuals in the media, arts, communication and technology in the process of enriching the Jewish experience.

9) Media can project educational values and cultural frameworks to learn and experience Jewish behaviors in a non-threatening and comfortable environment.

10) Interactive video could provide a new avenue for training Jewish educational personnel.

These goals are both desirable and reachable through a concerted program for Media in Jewish Education.

Why is this not already being done? The limited and narrowly defined markets discourage the entrepreneur from investing time and money. This means that most projects have to be funded or subsidized through grants. This reliance on grants discourages people from going into Jewish media production full time as job security is limited. A lack of experience and precedent in media production impedes progress. Few ongoing formats exist for planning and implementing these goals.

### Getting On Line

Various aspects of media production, dissemination, and usage require funding, planning, and implementation if media is to become an integral asset in the advancement of Jewish Education.

### Production and Distribution of Media

A number of assumptions guide the production of media for Jewish Education. These assumptions include:

- 1) Professional productions of materials is essential.
- 2) Bringing together educational professionals and media professionals. This means involving "Hollywood types," top professionals, in film and television, public relations, etc.



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- 3) There should be constant feedback and direction from the various consumers (i.e. teachers, students, home and media center personnel) across the many branches of Judaism and the continent.
- 4) Production should be centralized.

The design of the following model fulfills these requirements. This model is cyclical in nature.

Step 1: Goal Setting, Idea Generation, Consultation involving educators, lay personnel or target groups, the consumer, and media personnel in helping envision the needs of the market.

Step 2: Creative Production involves the media professionals who create top rate media for Jewish education.

Step 3: Marketing requires the development of strategies to attract the consumer, including the home audience and the marginally affiliated, to these products.

Step 4: A broad Distribution/Information Network requires a central clearinghouse to coordinate commercial distribution channels. The individual "home consumer" needs to be able to access this network for advice about materials, and for purchasing materials. Each Jewish community needs to have these materials in a central location where Jewish educators, parents, individuals can preview, obtain information, and check out these materials.

### The Use of Media

This cyclical process reaches its completion through the use of media. Here too, there are several concerns.

1) Effective use of media in Jewish settings requires personnel to supervise and guide its integration within the curriculum in the various Jewish educational settings. Fulltime staff in larger communities and key personnel in smaller communities are needed for providing this



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assistance. This could include: the production of spin-off interactive computer programs; the distribution of newsletters and target mailings about media materials; the development of curriculum. Additionally, these people would need to offer assistance and training in the use of equipment as many teachers are not technologically literate.

2) Teachers and Educational Staff must be involved in all parts of this process of production, distribution and utilization. Their ownership is crucial as they are the key to pervasive and successful implementation of these new media materials and technologies. A major concern is their present lack of "media literacy" and inability to handle some of the simplest media machines including video cassette recorders and personal computers.

3) Jewish educational settings require up-to-date equipment in sufficient quantities for the population. Many institutions would require grants to enable them to have this equipment.

4) Similarly, Jewish educational settings require funding to obtain sufficient copies of media materials that are needed regularly.

## Conclusion

Media and technology are untapped, underdeveloped methodologies for Jewish continuity and life. The whole concept of media and technology broadens one's thinking of what is a Jewish educational context, who is a potential student, and how we go about doing Jewish education. The potential benefits to Jewish life in reaching everyone from the marginally affiliated to parents through the use of media and technology awaits discovery. Media and technology respond to the needs of supplementary education, adult education, early childhood education, and family education, to name just four areas. This option paper presents

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workable solutions for production, distribution and utilization of media and technology in Jewish education. Through continental planning and local follow-up, the image, quality, and pervasiveness of Jewish Education in North America can be greatly enhanced.



## CONCLUSION

The field of Jewish education has become increasingly complex, differentiated, and specialized. This paper calls attention to five sub-fields without attempting to integrate them into a larger systematic framework. To do so is clearly beyond our scope.

Nevertheless, none of the five focal areas treated here should be viewed and understood in isolation from one another, or from the totality of Jewish Education. Each of the five sub-areas must progress on its own. Yet, each must also function in a highly interdependent, tightly integrated manner in order to yield cumulative effects of sufficient magnitude to impact the nature of Jewish continuity toward the 21st century and beyond.

In order for any of the sub-fields to significantly improve their capacity to transmit and transform Jewish life, a common body of requisites must be achieved. The first requisite - and *pre-requisite* to the others - is the establishment of an effective coordinating mechanism capable of guiding a comprehensive planned change process at the continental level. This "mechanism" need not be housed in a single building in a single locale, but may well entail a tightly-coupled network of offices, departments, or agencies, linked together by an administrative superstructure. This network will be responsible for the accomplishment of the remaining requisites.



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The maintenance of sufficient levels of funding for the operation of such a network is a second pre-requisite. When organizations are expected to achieve well beyond the scope of their means, cost-effectiveness is rarely maintained. The administrative overhead of the "network" should be kept lean. The purpose of the network is to responsibly direct major resources to those target communities and specific sites where they will reap the greatest return to the field.

The development of human resources in all areas of Jewish education is a requisite for enhanced quality and effectiveness. Issues of recruitment, placement and retention of personnel at all levels and in all types of Jewish education have been of major concern to leadership for many years. While the need for increased salaries, full-time employment opportunities, benefits, better-defined career ladders and new role categories are all of urgent importance, we point to some additional factors as well.

There is great need to strengthen the knowledge base which informs practice in all areas of Jewish education. Getting teachers and administrators into training programs is a (critical) first step. Knowing what knowledge and skills are required, given various student populations and program settings is a more difficult matter. Jewish education is not and should not be equivalent to public education. Without a specialized body of knowledge which, when possessed and appropriately used, designates expertise on the part of he/she who holds it, the effectiveness of our training programs, both pre-service and in-service, will operate at diminished capacity.

The evaluation and diffusion of programs and practices that work is another requisite for successful planned change at the continental level. The effective schools literature tells

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us that educators perform better when *they believe they possess the ability to make a difference in the lives of their students*. We must learn more about our own field(s), our practices, our educational environments, our students and ourselves. We must study programs that work to understand *why* they work and how they may be broadly diffused and adapted. To do so will require multi-year funding of innovations, with accompanying provisos for appropriate evaluation and accountability.

Another requisite entails the creation of new roles for Jewish educators. As boundaries between "types" of Jewish education become blurred, the need for both "generalists" and specialists will change. Not only are new role categories (e.g. Family Educator) needed, but new employment structures (e.g. Community Educator) as well.

We believe that these needs are intimately linked to issues of personnel and training, for if educators are truly possessors of expertise and believe themselves empowered to succeed, their ability to command higher salary and benefits will be fortified. Indeed, if this is the case, the return on communal investments in training will be abundant.

For coordinated, planned change to succeed on a continental level, *whole communities* should participate. We endorse the notion of targeting specific communities for concerted strategic planning, training, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives.

Both our specific and general suggestions validate the status of the "enabling options" (personnel needs, community structure and leadership, and financing) identified by the Commission as pre-conditions for achieving across-the-board improvements in Jewish education.

## Conclusion

A final point. Recognizing that most people and organizations are quick to resist change, we advise the projection of realistic expectations and time-frames. Institutional change is incremental, and we foresee no "quick-fix" solutions to the challenges of the day. At the same time, the presence of visionary, idealistic, energetic and resourceful leadership gives us cause for immense optimism about the future of our profession and our People.

